SOLANDER ISLAND ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

March 2003

Approved by:

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Date:

SOLANDER ISLAND ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Purpose Statement

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key role of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. All consumptive resource uses and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited. **Solander Island Ecological Reserve is closed to the public to protect nesting seabirds.**

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Solander Island Ecological Reserve is to protect the habitat of breeding populations of numerous species of seabirds, many of which are rare and endangered. The ecological reserve comprises an irregularly shaped, steep-sided island with associated offshore rocks and reefs that is encompassed entirely in Brooks Peninsula Park. This small eight-hectare island provides habitat for globally and nationally significant populations of burrow-nesting seabirds including Leach's storm petrel, Cassin's auklet, tufted puffin, pelagic cormorant, glaucous-winged gull, and pigeon guillemot. It has the second largest tufted puffin colony and pelagic cormorant colony, as well as the third largest Leach's storm petrel colony, on the British Columbia coast.

Non-nesting seabirds seen on or near the island include the horned puffin, rhinoceros auklet, common murre, lack-legged kittiwake, sooty shearwater, and Brandt's cormorant. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons (*subspecies pealei* which is nationally threatened) have been recorded, but nesting is not confirmed. The island is also used as a winter haul out by northern and California sea lions. Sea otters have been seen in the ecological reserve.

The island is devoid of trees, with the vegetative cover consisting mostly of grass species along with patches of salmonberry and other herbaceous species. The blue-listed plant hairy goldfields (*Lasthenia maritima*) occurs there, which has only six known occurrences in BC. This plant is unique in that it requires rocky coastal cliffs in the lowland zone (Coastal Western Hemlock vh1), often nitrified from guano deposits and it is rare in southwest BC.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of cultural values	➢ Research historical uses as a traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations.
Managing non-conforming uses (weather station, landing pad, recreational visitation) to minimize the impacts on natural values	➢ Carefully monitor existing federal facilities maintenance activities currently under park use permit. ➢ Monitor activity around the reserve and ensure seabirds are not being impacted. ➢ Recruit a Volunteer Warden and develop a more formal monitoring system. ➢ Work with appropriate agencies to ensure both marine and air access are controlled, and that aircraft movement over the island is limited. ➢ Increase public awareness including closed status of the ecological reserve.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☐	Too small to be representative
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☐	Too small to be representative
Special Features	☒	Seabird colonies, rare species, sea lion haul outs
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	*Red-listed* northern sea lion, sea otter. *Blue-listed* tufted puffin, Cassin's auklet. *Blue-listed* plant hairy goldfields. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S4)* pelagic cormorant.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Breeding seabirds

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☐	Not Applicable
destination	☐	Not Applicable
travel corridor	☐	Not Applicable
local recreation	☐	Not Applicable
Special Opportunities	☐	Not Applicable
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	Nesting seabirds -- offsite

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☐	Values unknown
Special Feature	☒	Possible egg gathering site

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☒	Important Bird Area (International program that identifies and supports the protection of lands having special bird habitats)
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of protected areas focused on bird breeding areas on the west coast of British Columbia. It is encompassed by Brooks Peninsula Park.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Not Applicable
Partnerships	☐	

Vulnerability	☒	Threats include potential oil spills, disturbance from boaters, and non-conforming uses (weather station and landing pad)
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	Marine Protected Areas Strategy

Area: 8 hectares

Date of establishment: May 4, 1971